

# **6** Steps to Conservation Easements

PRE-SCREENING OF LAND AND **PROJECTS** 

Speak to the **NRCS** easement specialist to determine if our program fits your needs.

APPLICATION AND ENTITY **ELIGIBILITY** 

With NRCS's help, complete an application for a conservation easement.

**FIELD VISITS** AND LAND **ELIGIBILITY** 

**NRCS** verifies landowner and land eligibility by visiting the property and reviewing the application.

RANKING **AGREEMENT** 

**Applications** are ranked based on program priorities. Agreements are signed with awardees.

ACQUISITION AND

CLOSING

Get a survey, title search, determine easement value, close on the easement. MONITORING AND RESTORATION

Monitor easement compliance; if wetland easement, complete restoration.

## Do you own farmland, forest, or wetlands and want to protect and/or restore them?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help you protect your land.



Land & Project **Pre-screening** 

**Contact our Easement** Professionals for a

free evaluation and consultation. Starting with a map and deed of your property, we'll see if one of our conservation easement programs meets your goals and explain the process and available financial assistance.



**Application** & Eligibility

We'll walk you through the application and the

landowner or entity eligibility process, including, but not limited to:

- The program application: CPA-1200
- Necessary eligibility forms
- DUNS and SAM registration (may be required)



Field Visit &

We'll visit your property Land Eligibility and meet with you to determine if your land is

## eligible for an NRCS

conservation easement. NRCS reviews the application, verifies landowner and parcel eligibility, orders an environmental records search, reviews the hazardous materials checklist with the landowner, and when a wetlands



Ranking & Agreement

NRCS will review and rank applications based on

## conservation and resource criteria like:

- Natural resource features
- Land conversion pressure from population growth
- Infrastructure factors and proximity to other protected land



Acquisition & Closing

NRCS will help guide the landowner or entity

through the acquisition and closing process. The easement purchase price is determined, a boundary survey is done to determine final easement acres, a title search and review is completed to ensure clear title, final deed language is reviewed and approved, and the easement is closed and recorded.



**Monitoring &** Restoration

After the easement is in place, monitoring occurs

to ensure compliance; for a wetlands easement, restoration and habitat enhancement is initiated. For both types of easements, a monitoring report is submitted annually by the easement holder in perpetuity.

Approximate Timeline: (Congressional actions can affect timelines including, but not limited to, the release of program funds.)

12-18 Months



1-3 Years for Restoration **Monitoring in Perpetuity** 



## **Conservation Districts**

## **Belknap County Conservation District**

2 Airport Rd., Unit 1 Gilford, NH 03249 603-527-5580 www.belknapccd.org

#### **Carroll County Conservation District**

P.O. Box 533 Conway, NH 03818 603-447-2771

#### **Cheshire County Conservation District**

11 Industrial Park Dr. Walpole, NH 03608 603-756-2988 www.cheshireconservation.org

#### **Coos County Conservation District**

4 Mayberry Lane Lancaster, NH 03584 603-788-4651

#### **Grafton County Conservation District**

19 Archertown Rd., Suite 1 Orford, NH 03777 603-353-4651 www.graftonccd.org

#### Hillsborough County Conservation District

#468, Rte. 13 South Milford, NH 03055 603-673-2409 www.hillsboroughccd.com

#### Merrimack County Conservation District

10 Ferry St., Suite 211 Concord, NH 03301 603-223-6023 www.merrimackccd.org

# Rockingham County Conservation District

110 North Rd. Brentwood, NH 03833 603-679-2790 www.rockinghamccd.org

## **Strafford County Conservation District**

264 County Farm Rd. Dover, NH 03820 603-749-3037 www.straffordccd.org

## **Sullivan County Conservation District**

95 County Farm Rd. Unity, NH 03743 603-542-4891 www.sullivancountynh.gov

www.suiiivancountynn.gov

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts:

www.nhacd.org



## Agricutural Conservation Easement Program

The 2014 Farm Bill combines the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), into two types of easements: Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE).

## **Agricultural Land Easements (ALE):**

- ALE will probably work much like FRPP in that NRCS will pay a maximum of 50% of the appraised easement value, and will not hold the easement.
- ♦ A sponsoring entity must submit the application package to NRCS (including the landowner application and eligibility forms, parcel, and entity workbooks), hold the easement, and match a minimum of 50% of the NRCS contribution (or 25% of the appraised easement value).
- The entity is also responsible for obtaining a title search, boundary survey, appraisal, baseline documentation, and negotiating the deed language between NRCS and the landowner.
- Funds are obligated to the sponsoring entity through a Cooperative Agreement. The 2014 Cooperative Agreement template should be available at the end of April or beginning of May.
- The sponsoring entity (typically a Land Trust or Conservation Commission) must have a DUNS number and have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) at the time of fund obligation. It is unknown at this time whether or not these rules also apply to the landowner if they are a landowner-entity (such as an LLC, Corporation, Trust).
- Land eligibility criteria have not yet been established. FRPP was: 1) minimum 50% prime, unique, statewide, or locally important soils; or 2) historical or archeological significance. (all parcels are limited to a maximum of 66% forestland), and the entity match must be demonstrated at the time of application.

## Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE):

- WRE will probably work much like WRP, in that there is no entity sponsorship required, the agreement is directly between NRCS and the landowner, the easement is held by NRCS, and the land must have been owned by the applicant for a minimum of 2 years prior to filing an application.
- ♦ The new land eligibility criteria has not been established yet, but the WRP land eligibility required a minimum of 50% of the land to be 1) wetland or 2) riparian land that connected to other riparian land already under conservation easement.
- NRCS is accepting applications on the new CPA-1200 form (dated 2/14), but they cannot be processed until additional guidance from National Headquarters is received.



## **NRCS** Easement Team:

Located at the State Office in Durham

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Ryan DuBois, ALE Easement Contact 603-868-9931 x124 ryan.dubois@nh.usda.gov

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## **NRCS New Hampshire Offices:**

## **New Hampshire State Office**

2 Madbury Rd. Durham, NH 03824 Richard P. Ellsmore, State Conservationist 603-868-7581

#### **Concord Field Service Center**

Serving Merrimack and Belknap Counties 10 Ferry St., Suite 211 Concord, NH 03301 603-223-6023

## **Conway Field Service Center**

Serving Carroll and Belknap Counties 73 Main St. Conway, NH 03818 603-447-2771

## **Epping Field Service Center**

Serving Rockingham and Strafford Counties 629 Calef Highway, Suite 203 Epping, NH 03042 603-679-1587

## **Lancaster Field Service Center**

Serving Coos County 4 Mayberry Lane Lancaster, NH 03584 603-788-4651

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